

DRAFT

***Watch Hill Fire District
Watch Hill, RI 02891***

PARK COMMISSION MEETING

Saturday, November 28, 2015

9:30 a.m.

Fire Station

222 Watch Hill Road

Watch Hill, RI

A meeting of the Park Commission of the Watch Hill Fire District was held at the Watch Hill Fire Station at 9:30 a.m., Saturday, November 28, 2015.

The following members were present:

Grant G. Simmons III, Chairman
Elizabeth Bean
Jeanne Blasberg
John Felber
Dabney Pierce

Others Present:

Nicholas Moore
Edwin Russell

Proper notice having been given, the Chairman, Grant G. Simmons III, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Mr. Simmons called for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 22, 2015 meeting, which were a subsection of the Finance Committee meeting minutes of that day. The motion was made, seconded and approved.

Mr. Simmons began with a discussion of Ft. Mansfield, which falls under the responsibility of the Park Commission. The Fort has deteriorated over time and is becoming dangerous. It may need to be demolished, although various approvals would need to be obtained. The Commission will look into various approaches to handle the current vandalism and the overall future of the Fort.

The 2014 State of Napatree Report was presented and reviewed, all positively. The 2015 report will be ready in January or the beginning of February.

A discussion was held concerning the new relationship between the Watch Hill Fire District and the Conservancy. The Conservancy will be taking over all of the Napatree Point scientific and educational programs and will handle all related accounting, including payment of employees. The Park Commission to continue to have direct oversight of the entire operation.

Mr. Simmons reported that the steel bulkhead in the harbor has a life of 10 to 15 years and that soft spots in the structure will be fixed this Spring by the divers that did the original survey. Back flow preventers will also be installed this Spring.

Mr. Simmons reported that the sheathing and dividing wall paneling has been removed from the changing rooms at the bathing beach and that the Fire District is seeking a demolition permit from the town to continue the removal of the remaining two by four framing and the installation of a stainless

steel open railing system around the perimeter of the structure, where needed. Mrs. Blasberg asked about the Bathing Beach/ Merry-go-Round lease, wondering when the lease expires and if it should be put out for bid. Mr. Simmons said he would investigate and get back to the Commission.

Mr. Simmons gave an update on the success of the Larkin Road Parking lot. There was a discussion of staffing personnel for the Ft. Road District parking lot and the need for an electric gate at the North parking lot for boaters' access only, which is in this year's budget.

Mr. Simmons reported that the Bay Street underground utility project is finished, with all the power now underground except for the power source for the street lights, which are still on the old telephone poles, awaiting town action to complete the lighting plan.

The Watch Hill Improvement Society's plans for the Park Restoration Project, which had previously been distributed, were reviewed and discussed by the Commission at great length. The primary concern was the positioning of Chief Ninigret, how welcoming he is to visitors coming into the district because of his face-on view versus a slightly elevated but turned to the west positioning with a stone paver walkway up to the Indian which would then have better visibility from the street. Mrs. Bean read an excerpt from a letter received from the Griscom family referring to the historic significance of the Chief facing to the west. A vote was taken on the proposed plan and it was approved as presented. The Chief will face West and the fountain will be restored to working order.

There was a discussion about insurance for the Chief Ninigret and the dreamer statue. It was agreed that insurance was needed to cover damages and theft. Mr. Simmons will obtain the necessary coverage.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:55 am

Respectfully submitted,

Judith H. Kelley
Office Manager